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SUMMARY REPORT

The Storage of Solar Energy in Small Rings

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THE STORAGE OF SOLAR ENERGY IN SMALL RINGS

ABSTRACT

Criteria for and results concerning the use of organic materials in the photochemical conversion of solar energy are summarized. Target molecules are shown to generally undergo endoergic valence isomerization upon irradiation with near ultraviolet and visible light (300 - 500 nm). Photoisomers are kinetically stable but revert to starting materials under thermal activation with or without a catalyst. Considerable variation is found in the quantum efficiencies, light absorption properties, and ease of retrieval of stored energy for several valence isomeric pairs. In selected systems 5 - 10% of absorbed photon energy is stored-as chemical potential energy.

Using emission and kinetics data for the isomerization systems, an evaluation of mechanism for energy storing photoreactions is presented. A useful generalization obtains: quantum efficiencies for reactions which store photon (radiant) energy in relatively stable products will be determined by the chemistry of intermediates formed after the absorption of light. Emphasis on this feature in the design of new and more efficient systems is called for.

Other developments related to the study of organic isomerization systems are noted, including their application as photorefractive holographic materials to be used in optical memory devices.

>

INTRODUCTION

Studies directed to the application of organic photochemistry in the utilization of solar energy have been initiated. The object of the work is to assess organic materials for their ability to undergo efficient photochemical reaction on absorption of atmospherically filtered solar radiation. Such reactions, driven by near ultraviolet and visible light, should be significantly endoergic and should give a reasonably stable isomeric product which can be reverted in a controlled thermal reaction to the original photoactive substance. In this hypothetical cyclic system, electronic excitation (radiant) energy is stored as chemical potential energy (as latent heat). Unlike sensible heat storage, this kind of energy retention does not require insulation as a critical parameter of efficiency and offers the possibility of medium to long range (days, weeks) storage of solar energy. Studies on target molecules produce information (through efficiency monitoring and maximization) regarding the ideal photochemical reaction for energy conversion.

The plan is to produce a working substance for use in a solar-thermal energy conversion unit. Alternative smaller scale uses of reversible organic photoreactions include the wavelength-sensitive monitoring of solar flux (development of inexpensive color test pyranometers).

Below are listed well recognized imperatives for the photochemical conversion of solar energy along with suggestions and observations relevant to applications in organic photochemistry. These generalizations are directed to the cyclic system:

$$A \xrightarrow{hy} B$$

<u>Imperative</u>

- Reactant A must absorb most
 of the visible and ultraviolet
 (filtered) solar emission
- Photoproduct B must not appreciably absorb solar emission.
- 3. The quantum yield for reactionA → B must be near unity.
- The reaction A → B must have a large positive ground state enthalpy.

Photoproduct B must be thermally (kinetically) stable.

Observation

Monophotonic photochemistry at >700 nm is quite unlikely; the useful range = 300 - 700 nm (40 - 90 kcal/Einstein), representing ∿50% of total solar energy.

Reaction should be photochromic with a decrease in the degree or continuity of unsaturation in A.

Intramolecular reactions should be generally favored over intermolecular reactions; highly luminescent chromophores should be avoided.

Selected <u>valence</u> photoisomerizations with $\Delta H = 10 - 30$ kcal/mol are common; reactions should be selected in which small rings are generated and/or aromaticity disrupted; such reactions are usually photochromic.

(<u>Geometric</u> photoisomerizations store little energy and are not significantly photochromic.)

Orbital topology restrictions for selected isomerizations enhance $A \rightarrow B$ (hv) and inhibit $B \rightarrow A$ (thermal); the most useful temperature range for reversion = $50 - 100^{\circ}$.

- Reactants A (B) must be inexpensive.

Metal or acid catalysis of isomerizations is well known, but efficiencies are not uniform and readily predictable.

Materials should be commercially available or prepared in short conventional syntheses; costs of manufacture are difficult to project; the program should not be overly limited by this criterion initially.

It is important to understand the blend of factors which in principle enable organic materials to store electronic excitation energy more efficiently and more permanently than inorganic substances. Properly selected organic systems have significant storage enthalpies because bond angle strain energies (~25 kcal/mol per small ring generated) and resonance energies, potentially gained and lost, respectively, during photoisomerization, are large. Additionally, orbital topology factors, understood in terms of selection rules governing potentially concerted thermal reactions², quite commonly confer on photoproducts of extreme thermodynamic instability, surprising kinetic stability in the absence of an appropriate catalyst. Besides these special features for organic materials, other advantages which would accrue to a photochemical solar-thermal energy conversion system are lower solar collector cost and weight, cloudy-day effectiveness, smaller storage area and reduced insulation, and storage capability at room temperature.³

II. WORK COMPLETED

In view of the above imperatives and observations, a number of valence isomerizations were examined during the first eighteen months of operation. The

results concerning four classes of compounds are summarized in the following Capsule Reports. The results are organized under symbols P (photochromism and absorption properties), \emptyset (quantum and chemical yield for photolysis), H (enthalpy change in the ground state, $A \rightarrow B$), T (temperature range and kinetic parameters for reversion), and \$ (availability of system, reflecting nominally the cost). A final assessment, of photon energy storage efficiency where sufficient data are available, is the calculation of "Q value" using a modification of the relationship suggested by Calvert la:

$$Q = \frac{\Delta H \times \emptyset \times 100}{E_{hy}}$$

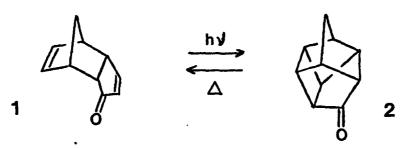
where ΔH is the gound state enthalpy change (A \rightarrow B) (kcal/mol), Ø is quantum efficiency, and $E_{h\nu}$ is photon energy (kcal/Einstein) (an average value for useable wavelengths of light).

The first report describes the photoisomerization of a ketone derivative of dicyclopentadiene (1), the attractive feature of which was the previously measured sizeable storage enthalpy. Although 1 does not absorb in the visible, chromophore modification was a straightforward option, if a good quantum yield and a facility for the back reaction could have been demonstrated. The subject of the second report is 1-ethoxycarbonyl-1H-azepine (5), whose photochromic isomerization to a strained bicyclic derivative and its thermal reverse were reported in qualitative but not quantitative detail. The third report involves pleaidiene (7), a hydrocarbon which absorbs strongly in the visible and which was reported as a product of thermal reaction from its strained valence isomer 8. Its photochemistry had not been previously examined.

The final report includes data for anthracene derivatives, a class of compounds about which there has been traditional speculation concerning energy storage capability. Our new approach to this system was to link anthracene

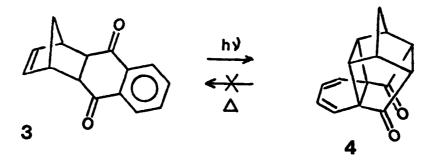
moieties into a single molecule in various ways in order to improve the quantum efficiency for photo-cycloaddition of the anthracene units, to raise the endothermicity of the photochemical step through the formation of new small rings required by the linkage, and to enhance absorption in the visible by enforcing chromophore interaction. Reports concerning such system have appeared, but quantitative data have not been available.

CAPSULE REPORT I (For details see Technical Report No. 1)



- P λ_{max} (1) = 330 nm, λ_{max} (2) = <300 nm; useful range = 300 380 nm.
- \emptyset \emptyset = 0.40 in solution (330 380 nm); >99% chemical yield.
- H $\Delta H = 16.4 \text{ kcal/mol}$, measured by heat of combustion.⁴
- T 2 stable to 295°; reversion catalyzed by Rh(I) complexes. (140 - 180°); good yield for catalyzed reversion but catalysts degrade on cycling.
- \$ Two-step preparation of \(\) from dicyclopentadiene; similar chemical available on industrial scale at \$0.50/lb.

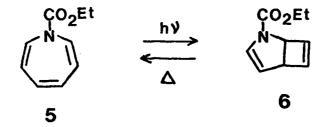
Assessment. P, \emptyset , H, \$ and the stability of 2 encourage an extension to a similar system absorbing in the visible. 0 = 8%, which compares favorably with inorganic photochemical storage systems however, metal catalysts are unsuited for the reversion reaction and acid catalysts examined so far are also not sufficiently effective. A similar photoisomerization system $(3 \rightarrow 4)$ which shows remarkable quantum efficiency $(0 = 1.0^8)$, was investigated; reversion $4 \rightarrow 3$ could not be affected cleanly on heating with or without catalyst.



Basic research contributions. The kinetics of Rh(I) catalysis were examined in detail⁹, resulting in a ranking of transition metal complexes for reactions of the type $\chi \to \chi$. The rate of catalyzed isomerization of χ was compared with other "cage" compounds. The catalyzed exothermic opening of small rings was shown to be less facile than previously expected, with χ representing a substrate limit for catalyzed reversion.

The photochemical kinetics of $1 \to 2$ were examined. Ouenching studies showed that the lifetime for the reactive triplet excited state of 1 is extremely short and temperature dependent. To accommodate lifetime and quantum yield data a mechanism is required in which an intermediate is interposed between triplet 1 and 2. It is partitioning of this transient species which determines quantum yield.

CAPSULE REPORT II (For details, see Technical Report No. 2)

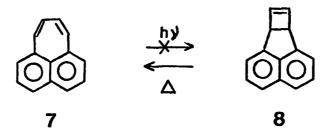


- P λ_{max} (5) = 330 nm (tails to 500 nm, orange in color); 6 absorbs at <300 nm; useful range = 300 460 nm.
- \emptyset = 0.013 in solution (330 380 nm); chemical yield >97%.
- H 10.4 kcal/mol, measured by differential scanning calorimetry.
- T Uncatalyzed reversion occurs cleanly at 113 143°; $E_a = 28.7 \text{ kcal/mol.}$
- \$ One-step preparation of 5 from benzene and ethyl azidoformate.

Assessment. System displays suitable photochromism and can be driven readily on a small scale with sunlight or with laser emission (458 nm). The uncatalyzed reversion requires suitable temperatures and the system can be cycled in sequential photolysis - pyrolysis steps. However, the quantum efficiency is unacceptable; Q = 0.21%. Also, some system degradation occurs over ten energy storage cycles.

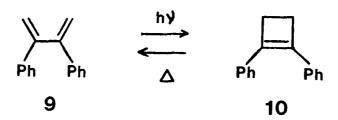
Basic research contributions. The excited state responsible for isomerization 5 o 6 was identified as the n,II* singlet. Excited triplet states of 5 are unreactive. On the basis of absorption, sensitization, and quenching data and in the absence of luminescence from 5, energies of the low lying excited states were determined ($5_1 = 60 \pm 1 \text{ kcal/mol}$), $T_1 = 55 \pm 1 \text{ kcal/mol}$). A mechanism is proposed in which an intermediate is involved for both photolysis of 5 and pyrolysis of 6.

CAPSULE REPORT III



- P 7 absorbs strongly at 300 520 nm (red in color), 8 absorbs at <320 nm (colorless).
- \emptyset = <0.01 (in benzene, 330 380 nm).
- H unknown, estimated 10 20 kcal/mol by comparison with similar systems.
- T 200°, high yield.⁶
- \$ Three-step preparation from acenaphthalene and maleic anhydride; procedure somewhat tedious.

Assessment. Photoisomerization could not be affected under several sets of conditions. Although absorption and thermal parameters for the system are acceptable, a strategy for promoting the photoreaction is not obvious. A survey of isomerizations of aromatic hydrocarbons reveals that quantum efficiencies are generally low. For example, the endoergic, thermally reversible isomerization $9 \rightarrow 10$ was brought about by irradiation at 254 nm, but 0 = 0.025. A low triplet energy is expected for 9, but visible absorbing and other photosensitizers did not promote valence isomerization.



CAPSULE REPORT IV

a:
$$X = CH_2CH_2$$
, $Y = H$

b:
$$X = CH_2CH_2$$
, $Y = CH_3$

c:
$$X = CH_2$$
, $Y = H$

d:
$$X = CHOH$$
, $Y = H$

e:
$$X = CH_2CH_2$$
, $Y = CH_2CH_2$

- P]]a]]d absorb strongly at 350 420 nm (yellow in color),]]e absorbs strongly at 400 - 450 nm (tailing to 520 nm, orange in color),]2 absorb at <300 nm (colorless).
- ø see table for isomerization and fluorescence quantum yield
 data (benzene solution); chemical yields for photoisomerization are >99%.
- H see table for enthalpy values (kcal/mol) determined by DSC for thermal back reaction in the solid state.
- T see table for temperature ranges for back reaction $(\gamma_{1/2} = 30 120 \text{ min})$.
- \$ Typical syntheses require 3 4 steps for anthracene, anthraquinone, or anthrone starting materials (yields good to excellent).

Table I. Photo-thermal Data for Isomerizations $11 \ddagger 12$

	Ø _{isom}	ø _{flr}	ΔН	Q(%)	T(°C)
a	0.26	0.16	14.6	5.4	120-135
ь	0.05	0.14			
С	0.15	0.06	17.3	3.7	130-150
đ	0.29	0.02			
e	0.36	< 0.001	8.5	5.1	60-70

Assessment. The reactions $11 \rightarrow 12$ are nicely photochromic and 11 absorbs significantly in the visible. The linking of the anthracene units was success- . ful in enhancing quantum efficiencies for cycloaddition (for comparison, \emptyset = 0.1 is the maximum efficiency for intermolecular cycloaddition of 9-methylanthracene and, for this model, fluorescence is more competitive, \emptyset = 0.5). Storage enthalpies are good but somewhat lower than anticipated on the basis of the strain energy gained and aromaticity lost in photoisomerization (for more details, see Other New Developments, part 1). (Q values are shown in Table I.) Reversion reactions occur cleanly at reasonable temperatures without a catalyst present. The systems may be cycled moderately well; generally after thirty successive photochemical and thermal steps, decomposition is significant. Relatively low solubility of χ and χ in common solvents is a disadvantage for the system. On the other hand, solvent can be avoided since anthracenes \mathbb{N} can be incorporated in polymeric films. In early experiments this solid state alternative appears promising;]]d has been shown to efficiently and reversibly photoisomerize polymethyl methacrylate. in

Basic research contributions. The most complete set of photophysical and photochemical data concerning linked aromatic systems has been provided for the

anthracenes in our study. Fluroescence quantum yield and lifetime measurements point to an unusually rapid decay of singlet excited states for \mathbb{N} . This decay channel which is fostered by the linking of anthracene chromophores is more likely the result of intramolecular photochemical reaction than the result of introduction of a new or enhanced mode of unreactive radiationless decay (e.g., a higher rate of intersystem crossing). This reactive decay channel cannot involve direct formation of photoisomer since the quantum efficiency of isomerization is <1.

A mechanism involving formation of an intermediate following excitation is consistent with the results. Partitioning of this intermediate between \mathbb{N} and \mathbb{N} determines quantum efficiency for the system.

III. OVERVIEW

Principal Findings. All of the organic isomerization systems studied so far satisfy at least two of the five criteria for solar energy conversion: absorption and photochromism (P), quantum efficiency (\emptyset), storage enthalpy (H), back reaction suitability (T), and material availability (\$). Systems 1,2 and 3,4 meet three of the requirements (\emptyset , H, and \$) quite well, could be modified in order to utilize more of the solar spectrum (satisfying criterion P), but are principally deficient in not having a clean back reaction under catalysis conditions. System 5,6 shows promise on bases other than its quantum efficiency. The most successful systems to date are the linked anthracenes (11, 12). System 11e,12e is the best of these, meeting to a significant degree all five criteria. Where cycling experiments could be performed (5,6 and 11,12), an order of magnitude for fatigue of the systems has been established: 10 - 30 cycles are practical; as many as 100 cycles appears unachieveable for the isomerizations examined so far.

Photon energy conversion efficiencies (Q values) determined from experimental data for 1,2 (8%) and for selected systems, 11,12 (\sim 5%) and estimated for 3,4 (25%) compare favorably with values calculated for inorganic photochemical storage

systems. la This result is due principally to the comparatively large storage enthalpies which properly selected organic systems display. A most encouraging aspect of our findings is that this extreme thermodynamic instability in photoproducts is matched with good kinetic stability (relatively high temperatures required for back reactions); i.e., a significant fraction of radiant energy can be almost indefinitely stored as chemical potential energy. Although this feature of organic isomerization systems has been known for some time and is theoretically understood², the growing number of examples for which the phenomenon is experimentally verified warrants further investigation in terms of its application.

Mechanistic studies, completed as an ancillary part of the program, have been valuable (note Basic research contributions in the Capsule Reports). A mechanistic pattern has developed which will aid in designing new systems (see Appendix for details). In particular, our findings point to the partitioning of intermediates formed after absorption of radiation (and not to the partitioning of an initially formed excited state) as the factor which determines quantum efficiency of isomerization.

<u>Prospectus</u>. Some further development of the linked anthracene systems (11, 12) is anticipated. Experiments will be directed to achieving greater use of visible light in driving photoisomerizations and to finding a catalyst which will allow a cleaner back reaction (but still at a useful temperature) and less fatigue.

Our initial purpose was to conduct a broad survey of organic isomerizations. A more convincing demonstration of energy conversion, than that achieved in systems examined so far, may be found in other isomerizations which employ different light absorbing units and somewhat different reaction schemes. We will extend our survey to systems which employ the biacetyl, quinone, and thione chromophores (expected photoactivity in the 450 - 500, 500 - 550, and 550 - 650 nm regions, respectively). The aforementioned generality concerning isomerization mechanisms (see Appendix) which evolved from our early work, will be an important aspect of design for the new systems. Catalysis of the back reaction, important for controlling energy

retrieval and reducing any energy expenditure involved in recovering stored heat, will be emphasized.

In light of our early experience it is prudent to update our perspective on the application of organic isomerizations in the photochemical conversion of solar energy:

How much of the solar spectrum can Probably 40% (on an energy basis) (300 be employed to drive efficiently 600 nm). Modestly efficient use of the (with single photons) an endoergic 300 - 500 range already demonstrated. isomerization? How much of absorbed solar energy Half of absorbed photon energy (avg., 55 can be stored? kcal/Einstein) probably can be stored (27 kcal/mol). Storage enthalpies in the 10 -20 kcal/mol range already documented. What is the energy density of See Table II for a comparison of heat organic photoproducts? storage systems. Note that organic systems so far examined deliver heat at 50 - 150°. What level of system fatigue will From the crude comparison of Table II, be acceptable? >100 cycles is a reasonable goal. This level of material survival has not yet been achieved. Somewhat lower operating temperatures for the back reaction may be required. Must be \$1.00/lb. Material cost of re-What cost of the organic storage versible storage of 10^6 Btu = 4,000.

material will be acceptable?

Table II. Energy Storage Capacities of Materials

MATERIAL		KCAL/MOL	CAL/G	BTU/LB
SENSIBLE HEAT STORAGE				
WATER ($\Delta T = 50^{\circ}C$) ROCK, METAL ($\Delta T = 50^{\circ}C$)		0.9	50	91
			10	18
LATENT HEAT STORAGE METHANE (COMBUSTION)		210	13,100	23,600
GLAUBER'S SALT ^a (1 CYC	LE)	11	60	108
(100 CYCLES)			6,000	10,800
ORGANIC VALENCE ISOMER	(1 CYCLE)	20	100	180
(MW 200)	(100 CYCLES)		10,000	18,000

^aSodium sulfate decahydrate, a phase change heat of fusion material which absorbs on melting and delivers heat (at $\sim 30^{\circ}$) on crystallization. Potential and problems for use of this material in solar energy conversion are described in ref. 13.

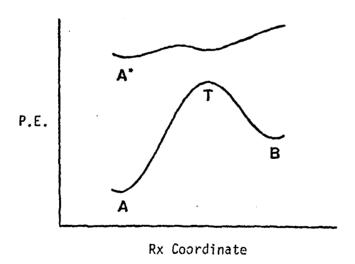
Other New Developments.

- (1) Photocalorimetry. In connection with several problems encountered with measuring storage enthalpies, we have made approaches to the development of a new photochemical technique (the dir calorimetric measurement of ground state enresult of photochemical reaction). We observed thalpy absorbed or liberated a that storage enthalpies measured as solid-solid transitions for 12 + 11 by differential scanning calorimetry were less than half that estimated on the basis of bond energy and other data. We reasoned that a more reliable measure of heat absorbed by the system as the result of irradiation in solution could be obtained by irradiating samples directly in dewar flasks equipped with sensitive thermistors under controlled optical conditions. Our measurements are not as yet sufficiently precise, but they do indicate a significantly higher storage enthalpy than that determined by DSC for back reaction in the solid state. If our instrumentation can be improved the technique will be important for determination of a wide range of photo-thermochemical properties.
- (2) Applications for optical memories. In connection with our collaboration with a group at Batteile Laboratories in the preparation of energy storing polymeric films, a number of experiments have been carried out in order to assess reversible photorefractive behavior. We have in mind the potential development of one or more of the organic isomerization systems (e.g., 11,12) as a holographic recording material. We have so far shown that the system 11,12d can be driven in both directions photochemically, and the photochromism observed for the system in a polymethyl methacrylate film is substantial. The required significant change in refractive index upon irradiation is expected. Using these and other similar materials, experiments will be directed now to the development of phase holograms with the capability of recording, reading, and erasing information.

IV. APPENDIX

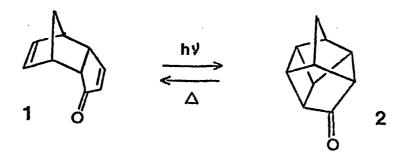
The Importance of Intermediate Partitioning In Energy Storing Photoreactions

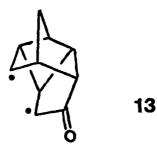
The problem which is central to the observation of significant photoreactivity using low energy (single) photons (practically speaking, the visible portion of solar radiation) is illustrated in the figure below. The objective of one energy conversion scheme is to drive a starting material A to photoproduct B, which is energy-rich, reasonably kinetically stable, and revertible to A. Quantum efficiency will depend largely on the extent to which A* avoids a sizeable ground state potential energy barrier. In selecting materials which absorb increasingly toward the red, a point is reached at which A* has insufficient energy to mount the thermal surface, and photoreactivity will cease unless special mechanisms are employed (e.g., significant thermal activation of A*, tunneling, etc.). We



have examined several systems for which the excitation energy $(A - A^*)$ exceeds the thermal barrier (A - T) by no more than 20 kcal/mol. The data permit the generalizations that kinetically identifiable intermediates are important for endoergic photoisomerizations which give stable products, and that it is the partitioning of these intermediates (and not competitive decays of the initial excited species) which determine quantum efficiencies.

The case for intermediate partitioning is illustrated for dienone 1. Quenching studies show that the lifetime of reactive triplet 1 is extremely short and temperature dependent $(k_{decay} = 1.1 - 3.5 \times 10^{10} \text{sec}^{-1}, 4 - 51^{\circ}\text{C})$. Normal (unreactive) radiationless decay for cyclic enones is no faster than 10^{8} sec^{-1} . A fast reactive decay channel for triplet 1 appears responsible for the short lifetime, but <u>direct</u> formation of 2 without competition is ruled out by the observed quantum efficiency ($\emptyset = 0.36$, 320 - 380 nm). The required mechanism involves one or more intermediates (e.g., 13), formation of which from triplet 1 is lifetime limiting and partitioning of which (to 1 and to 2) determines the quantum yield.





A similar pattern of kinetics and quantum yields is found for linked anthracenes \mathbf{M} (Capsule Report 4). Should this pattern of intermediate partitioning be even more general? Current theory regarding reactive radiationless decay affirms the trend. 15 The systems selected, for which kinetic stability and thermodynamic instability in photoproduct are compatible, exhibit weakly avoided surface crossings (normally S_0 and S_2). At some near mid-point along the reaction coordinate, excited and ground surfaces will be close lying for facile radiationless transition and minima in S_1 and T_1 will be provided. From this diradical and biradicaloid geometry (corresponding, in the cycloadditions presented, to structures with one bond made and the other left incomplete, e.g., 13) excited molecules funnel to product and back to reactant. Anticipation of electronic factors which control partitioning (for example, the introduction of dipolar character 16 in the intermediate through appropriate substitution which would favor product formation as the result of electrostatic attraction of centers which must bond in the final step) should be valuable in designing energy storing systems which can be driven with high quantum efficiency.

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